

EPISTLE TO

The Truly Religious and Loyal

GENTRY

OF THE

Church of England,

12

Written by *Edmund Ellis*, Rector of *East Arlington*, in the
County of *Devon*.

Γενώμεθα χερσὶ εὐσπλαγχνοῖ, συμπάθει μιμησώμεθα τῇ διαπόσει
τὴν ἀγαθότητα.

ἐκκαλεσθέντες ἑαυτοὺς τὴν εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶ θεός. *Greg. Nazianz.*
Orat. 9.



LONDON,

Printed in the Year MDCLXXXVII.

EPISTLE

TO

The Truly Religious and Loyal

GENTRY

OF THE

Church of England

1289

Printed by Edmund E. Rector of Bath, in the
County of Somerset.

The Author of this Epistle, hath been
many Years a Minister of the Gospel
in the County of Somerset.

LONDON

Printed in the Year MDCCXXV

An EPISTLE to the Truly Religious
and Loyal GENTRY of the
CHURCH of England, &c.

My Honour'd Brethren,

IF I thought the Address, I here make unto you had need of an *Apologie*, it would be Uncapable of any. My Confidence, I confess, is utterly Inexcusable, if it be not grounded upon *Reason*. What I Desire therefore is only this, That you would be Pleased to Condescend to the most Serious Consideration of what is Said by so Obscure a Person.

I Do not Pretend to any Skill in the Letter of Our *Common Law*, but that Law which All Mankind Ought to be, and that Law which All Christians Profess they are Govern'd by, has been my Study above thirty Years: And in the prosecution of *Charity*, or *Divine Love*, to which All my Speculations naturally Tend, I find it my Duty to Endeavour with all my might to Communicate the Knowledge I have of this Truth: that if
the

the Parliament shall Comply with His Majesties most Just, and Equitable Desire of the *Abrogation* of all such Laws against the Papists which are more *Rigorous* than any of those against the other *Nonconformists*, it would most certainly conduce to the *Glory of God, and the Good of Men*. If any men should say what Impudence is this? Is not such a Proposal Contrary to the Present Government? I should Confidently Answer, It is not. And the Reasons of this Confidence I shall here (as well as I can within the compass of a Letter) in all Humility tender to your Consideration. By those words of the Blessed Apostle, „Do we then make void the „Law, yea we establish the Law. I am prompted to say to our Adversaries in this Case, Do we subvert, yea we Establish the Present Government. That this may be clearly perceiv'd, I shall desire that it may be duly consider'd that whatsoever tends to the Establishing of the Rights of Our
MON-

MONARCHIE does most certainly
 tend to the Establishing of Our Ci-
 vill Government: And what is it to
 Establish the Rights of **MONAR-**
CHIE but to Secure All Due Obedi-
 ence to Our **MONARCH** and His
 Successors throughout All Generati-
 ons? Tho it be True indeed that it is
 the Duty of All Subjects, Enjoyn'd
 by the *Fifth Commandment*, to retain a
FILIAL Affection for their **PRINCE**
 the **FATHER** of their Country,
 whatsoever he Does, or Designs, yet
 alas! since the Generality of men are
 Led more by the *Love of Life and Estate*
 than a Sense of Duty towards God
 and the Hopes of Glory in the World
 to come, and since so many of those
 who are *Habitually* Heavenly-minded
 often fall from their Better Temper,
 and are carried in the stream of Secu-
 lar Interest, How can it be supposed,
 that *Subjects* should be united in their
 Affections to their *Prince*, and to one
 another, whilst there are *Laws Standing*
 against so great a Number of Them,
 that

that are Persons very Ingenious, very Well bred, and of great Estates, many of them of Our most Antient Nobility, and many Exceeding Learned; Laws I say, which if put in Execution, would deprive them of their *Lives*, or *Estates*? And what do those men Intimate that are so Eager against the *Abrogating* of such Laws but that they Hope for a Time when they shall get the Bloud of some of their *Loyall Fellow-subjects* to be Shed, or their Estates taken from them, because they cannot Do what their Consciences, supported by the Concurring Judgements of Thousands of Sober, and Learned men, Oblidge them not to Do? if it shall be said what signifies an Oath to a Papist &c.? I shall most humbly beg that it may be considered whether such an Objection can have any thing in it of *Natural Conscience*, or *Common Honesty*, since Few, or none, that we know of the Papists, who took the Oath of Allegiance did ever Break it, but all the world knows it was broken

Broken in the most haynous manner that possibly could be by Thousands of that sort of People who are, and ever have been most *Bloudily* set against the Papists. And as for this sort of People, who Murthered the Father of Our Gracious Sovereign, Attempted the Murthering of His Brother, and the Excluding of Himself from His Royal Inheritance and who were (I think, I may say All of them in their Persons, or in their Hearts and Affections) so lately in Open Rebellion against Himself, let us Observe His Majesties most Mercifull and Gracious Dealings with Them : And Admire the Benignity of that Wisdom which has hitherto Govern'd Him since the Divine Providence brought Him to be Our Governour next, and Immediately Under the Great and Glorious MONARCH of Heaven, and Earth. And since He is so Kind to them, how *Crooked* and *Perverse* would it seem, if we should endeavour to Obstruct the Current of His Sacred Clemency; when it Flowes towards Persons of His own Perswasion, in a way so just and Equitable in the sight of all men ? How much it would contribute to the Peace and Tranquillity, the Ease, and Comfort of a *Protestant Successor*, if the Papists were freed from the Terror of those Dreadful Laws I could speak largely. But I shall hasten to my other Point, to shew that this *Lenity* to the Papists could be no Disadvantage to the *Church of England* but rather a great Advantage in as much as we should

should thereby Declare to all the world the Sincerity of Our Profession to be *Meek, and Lowly in Heart*, And that we will not be Affrighted by the *Pharisaicall Multitude* from Acknowledging All the Truth we find Profest, and all the Uirtue we find Practiced by Papists. The *Holy Fathers* and the *Four First Generall Councils*, next to the *Holy Scriptures*, Our Church is Founded upon; And how many Learned men in this Kingdome began to make light of these Blessed Records of Christian Antiquity? which *Growing Evill* the Courſe, which His Majesty has taken will most undoubtedly Suppress.

If these Dreadfull Laws were *Repeal'd* certainly it would take off the Edge of the Animofities, which cannot but be in the Hearts of some Learned Papists against the Church of England which must needs make them in their Writings more *Pungent* than otherwise they would be. For, (poor men) they may justly apprehend that the Standing of Our Church tends to the Destruction of their Lives if Our Church cannot stand without those Severe Laws that have been made against them.

I shall give you no further trouble at present, but shall Commend you to the the Protection and Instruction of the *Almighty, and Onely Wise God, the God of Peace, and Love*, And shall ever remaine

Your Affectionate.

Philothous.




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